The University of Chicago

# SAMUEL DAVIES: COLONIAL REVIVALIST AND CHAMPION OF RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MARCH, 1942

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GEORGE H. BOST

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PREFATORY NOTE

In the following reproduction of the chapter which constitutes the essential portion of the thesis of Mr. George H. Bost there are numerous references to other chapters in the thesis. The complete dissertation is to be found only in the University of Chicago Libraries.

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## CHAPTER VI

## CHAMPION OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Meaning of the chapter title.--Davies could not be called the champion of religious liberty in the sense of demanding complete freedom of worship for all, as he did not commit himself on that question. It was too far beyond his immediate situation and problems to be an issue. He deserves the title, however, because he fought with all his might and with every weapon at his disposal for the religious rights of those to whom he ministered, and what he gained for them he gained for all dissenters in Virginia. It might be said that he simply fought for religious toleration, but since the interpretation of what constituted toleration under the law was a major issue, it would be more accurate to say that he fought for religious liberty for his people and that his method was to demand their rights to the fullest extent as permitted by a generous interpretation of the law. To ask for more would have meant practically a demand for the elimination of the Establishment. This was to come later, no doubt partially as a result of Davies's influence persisting in the Presbytery of Hanover after his departure.

The nature of the struggle.--The story of Davies's struggle on behalf of the Virginia dissenters is that of a step by step progression against various obstacles. His first victory was the licensing of meeting houses. Samuel Morris had not obtained licenses for his Reading House nor were any obtained for those erected later. He and others had been fined for carrying on religious services contrary to law, and not long before Davies's arrival a proclamation on the door of the Morris Reading House forbade people to assemble and listen to "itinerants." On his first visit, in 1747, Davies took the precaution of first stopping at Williamsburg and obtaining licenses for four meeting places, and when he returned in the spring of 1748 to settle in

Hanover he secured licenses for three more.[1] Dissenters were permitted to listen to Davies at the seven licensed meeting houses.

This might have been the solution for the dissenters and the end of their difficulties, consequently the end of Davies's campaign to secure their rights. As they grew in numbers and more congregations formed, licenses could be taken out by Davies and other ministers for more meeting houses. So it would seem, but such was not the intention of the authorities. At the very time Davies, with much difficulty, obtained the three additional licenses, John Rodgers was refused a license. "We have Mr. Rodgers out, and we are determined to keep him out," said a member of the Council.[2] Since there was no particular objection to Rodgers, his rejection meant that the colonial court was refusing to license any Presbyterian minister but Davies. This was a serious limitation, for Davies already had too much territory to cover. It was not the only limitation, however, for the General Court refused to license any more meeting houses, and some of the members wanted to reduce to one those which Davies should be permitted to serve.[3] When he received the three, an application for Cumberland was ignored, perhaps because it was too far from Hanover, and soon afterward a license which New Kent had obtained from the county court was rescinded by the General Court.[4] Davies was frequently to hear himself called an "itinerant," but no one ever seemed to see anything inconsistant between refusing him the help which would have enabled him to divide the territory and ac-

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[1] Supra, pp. 39-44. At the time of Davies's visit in 1747, the prosecution of Hanover dissenters was at its height, and he obtained his four licenses at the very time cases were pending against Thomas Watkins, Isaac Winston, Samuel Morris, and others. Most of the charges were later dismissed as false, but some fines were assessed. Morris had been fined repeatedly. William Henry Foote, Sketches of Virginia (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1850) Series I, pp. 141, 160-66. Letter to Bellamy, June 28, 1751, John Gillies, Historical Collections relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel (Glasgow: Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1754), pp. 333-34.

[2] Samuel Miller, Memoir of the Rev. John Rodgers (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1840), p. 46.

[3] Foote, op. cit., pp. 170-71.

[4] Supra, pp. 45 and 113.

cusing him of itinerating because he tried to cover it himself. This question of the number of places he should be permitted to serve, with its companion question of what constituted itinerating, was to dog his footsteps throughout the greater part of his Hanover ministry. It was to be the subject of an extensive correspondence. It was to bear a relationship to the question of a strict or broad interpretation of the Act of Toleration. Before the course which this license question travelled can be followed, it will be necessary to say something about the application of the Toleration Act to Virginia. The account of it begins with another victory for Davies.

Did the Act of Toleration apply to Virginia?.--Extremists in the opposition went so far as to hold that the Act of Toleration did not apply to Virginia. According to one source this was the view of the Attorney General, Peyton Randolph.[1] While the testi-

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[1]"Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Davies," Evangelical and Literary Magazine, II (March, 1819), 118. The account here given of Davies's appearance in court and the effect of his able and eloquent argument is so complimentary that it cannot be taken at face value, but the outline is probably true, as the story is that of an eyewitness and parts of it are in harmony with what is known from other sources. John H. Rice, the editor of the Magazine, gives the account as related by Captain John Morton, who accompanied Davies to Williamsburg. On this occasion Davies was invited to argue his own case before the General Court. Morton thought the members of the Court did this with the thought that they would have some sport at Davies's expense, but more likely it was done with serious purpose. Davies made it a practice to attend the sessions of the Court. On this same page Rice says that on several occasions Davies "appeared before the General Court in support of his cause." In his letters to Holt, Davies wrote as though it was his practice to go regularly. On Aug. 13, 1751, he wrote, "I am apprehensive my journey to the northward will deprive me of the usual happiness of seeing you at the General Court." In his letters of Feb. 10, 1749, March, 1750,and Sept. 12, 1751, he was looking forward to his visit in Williamsburg, and in the second he said he expected to "wait upon" Holt at the General Court in April. In no mention of his appearances at court is any reference made to his being represented by counsel. He knew the law and he was an able debater. There was probably no one else in the colony who could and would defend Davies's cause as well as he could himself. According to Morton, Davies's opponent on this occasion was none other than Peyton Randolph, who spoke first, arguing that the Act of Toleration did not extend to the colony. The date is not given, but this was probably the session at which Davies obtained the three additional licenses, for later the Attorney General would not likely have so argued, and other details in the account indicate that Davies was not well known by members of the court. As Davies rose to reply a general titter passed through the court, but soon "marks of surprise were manifest on every countenance. In

mony differs on this point,[1] the probability is that the Attorney General at least raised the question in his first clash with Davies, for the latter afterward mentioned having argued before the Court that the Toleration Act did apply to the colony,[2] and he reported that some had at first denied this though later it was generally conceded.[3] Davies had made a careful study of the law, and he was determined to fight it out on legal lines. His shy and sensitive nature would recoil at the thought of his standing before the General Court of the colony and arguing against the Attorney General, but he would have the courage to do it if he thought his cause required it and the opportunity presented itself. A few years later, when he observed Gilbert Tennent's embarrassment at being confronted in England with his Nottingham sermon, Davies wrote, "It. . . .brought me in mind of my mortifications in the General Court in Virginia."[4] This is not as glamorous a picture of him as that given by Captain Morton, but the remark probably refers to the same occasion and doubtless the truth lies between the two. Davies would underrate himself and be conscious of his embarrassing position, but he would give a good account of himself and make a favorable impression if the court were the least disposed to give him a fair hearing. Lawyers and others in attendance would undoubtedly be surprised and a little thrilled at the

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a short time the lawyers began to whisper, 'The attorney-general has met with his match to day, at any rate!' The position taken by Davies was that if the act of toleration did not extend to the colony of Virginia, then neither did the act of uniformity. This was illustrated with a force and ingenuity and knowledge of law perfectly astonishing, and completely victorious. The general sentiment among the members of the Bar. . . .was, 'There is a most capital lawyer spoiled.'" This won for Davies "universal admiration," and Governor Gooch and James Blair, a son of the former Commissary and a member of the Council, "were marked in their civilities."

[1]For example, Foote, op. cit., p. 170, says that he admitted its extension to Virginia in theory, but denied that its application in England was such as understood by Davies.

[2]Letter to Avery, May 21, 1752; Foote, op. cit., p. 209.

[3]Ibid., and letter to Doddridge, Oct. 2, 1750; William Stevens Perry, Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church, Vol. I, Virginia (Hartford, Conn: Church Press Company, 1870), p. 368.

[4]MS Journal, January 22, 1754, Library Union Theological Seminary, Richmond.

skill shown by the pale young preacher as he stood and refuted the argument of the Attorney General. If this was the same occasion on which Davies obtained the licenses for three additional places of worship, Foote's testimony agrees with regard to the results, "The lawyers in attendance complimented Mr. Davies; the Governor and majority of the council sustained him. The young Dissenter gained laurels."[1]

Davies's argument on this occasion ran somewhat as follows.[2] Although the Act of Uniformity and other English penal laws against non-conformity were not in force in the colonies, he recognized a law of the same kind passed by the Virginia legislature, requiring all adult persons to attend the Established Church. Neither did he plead the Act of Toleration as an English law, but "as received into the body of the Virginia laws" by the Virginia legislature, for in 1699 it exempted persons from the penalty for absence from church and permitted them to hold meetings if they qualified as Protestant dissenters under the terms of the Toleration Act.[3] He maintained then that he had a right to a license upon complying with the terms of the Act of Toleration. He won his point and was granted licenses for the three additional meeting houses. It was a victory for Davies, but not a complete victory. His opponents accepted his contention that the Act of Toleration extended to Virginia, or else were outvoted by those who did, but their next objection was that the Act did not permit a dissenting minister to have a plurality of meeting houses. The debate then resolved itself into a conflict between a broad and a

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[1]Foote, op. cit., p. 171.

[2]Letter to Avery, May 21, 1752, ibid., p. 209. He doesn't say when he presented this argument to the Court, but outlines it somewhat as above and adds, "This, sir, you may see in my remonstrance to the Governor and Council which I find has been laid before you." In his letter to Doddridge, op. cit., he also expresses his view that the colonial legislature had "expressly adopted" the Act of Toleration "so far at least as to exempt Protestant Dissenters from penalty for absenting themselves from Church." Compare Makemie's argument on same issue in his New York trial, Foote, op. cit., p. 67.

[3]Cf. H. J. Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Supt. of Public Printing, 1910), p. 32. For the act he refers to Hening's Statutes at Large, III, 171.

narrow interpretation of the Act of Toleration.[1] It was on the basis of the narrow interpretation that the General Court refused licenses for more than the seven meeting houses, and that was probably a compromise, as some wanted to reduce Davies to one. The sequence of this conflict, which was to last for years, will be set forth after a glimpse at some of the other forms of assault Davies had to meet in addition to the legal attacks.

Other kinds of attack on Davies.--Some of these were not only very disagreeable in themselves but contained strong potentialities for further hindrances. Mention has been made of the publication by the Rev. Patrick Henry of Caldwell's Impartial Trial, with the charge that the Hanover dissenters were not Presbyterians, as they claimed to be, but a schismatic sect that could have no claim to any rights under the Act of Toleration.[2] Bitter attacks were made upon the dissenters in press and pulpit, and the epithets used indicated the nature of charges often made against them. In his reply to Henry, Davies tells something of the nature of these attacks:

> Tho' the pulpits around me, I am told, ring with exclamatory harangues, accusations, arguments, railings, warnings, etc, etc, etc., against New-Lights, Methodists, Enthusiasts, Deceivers, Itinerants, Pretenders, etc, etc, etc., yet I never design to prostitute mine to such mean purpose. . . . .Satires, etc, are published in the Gazette, to alarm the world of these dangerous animals.[3]

As the alarm against the growing strength of the dissenters increased, appeals went from the clergy to the colonial burgesses, and from the governor and commissary went letters to the Bishop of London, who had jurisdiction over the Established Church in Virginia, asking him for advice on restraining Davies and his followers.

While Davies, as he said above, did not use his pulpit to fight back, and while he did not reply in kind to those who resorted to calling names, he did use every legitimate means in

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[1] "Now I think it is generally granted, and all the question is about the intent and meaning of this Act; particularly whether a dissenting congregation that is much dispersed and cannot meet at one place may claim a right by virtue of said act, to have a plurality of places licensed. . . . ." Davies letter to Avery, op. cit.

[2] Op. cit., pp. 381-83.

[3] Samuel Davies, Impartial Trial Impartially Tried,

his power to repel the onslaughts. His answer to The Impartial Trial has been discussed, and illustrates his use of the press to vindicate himself and his cause. Aside from that his methods and means consisted of fighting at Williamsburg for what he regarded as the correct application of the law, writing letters to prominent dissenters abroad, to the Bishop of London, to anyone who might have influence in the matter, appeals to the synod to send other ministers and thus to keep up the pressure to obtain licenses, an appeal to the synod to make representation to English dissenters regarding the plight of their Virginia brethren, his mission to Great Britain, and, not the least effective, his constant activity as preacher and pastor, working away in the face of all difficulties, winning more and more respect, and gaining more and more friends and adherents. Some of these have been described in other chapters.

The contest over number of Meeting-Houses permitted.--In the extended dispute over the number of meeting houses to which a dissenting minister was entitled, both Davies and his opponents looked to England for directions. The Commissary and Governor wrote to the Bishop of London; Davies wrote to leading British dissenters, Doddridge, Mauduit, and Avery. The question hinged primarily upon two factors, the practice in Great Britain, and the question whether a certain English law, an act of 10th Queen Anne which amended the Act of Toleration, extended to Virginia. As to British practice the answers were contradictory. The Bishop of London said one thing; the dissenters said just the opposite. How church leaders in the same country could differ so widely on current practice in their land is puzzling. Doddridge and Avery informed Davies that in Great Britain the question of meeting houses permitted a minister was not even raised; a dissenting congregation might secure a license for a meeting house anywhere desired, without even naming the minister.[1] The Bishop, on the other hand,

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(Williamsburg: W. Parks, 1748), pp. 26-27.

[1]Letter of Doddridge to Davies, 1751, Foote, op. cit., pp. 174-75. "That [I] know nothing of licensing. . . .for the use of particular persons, nor persons to preach in such and such places; a minister licensed according to law has a right indifferently to preach in any licensed place whatsoever, and every licensed place is open to every qualified minister whom the proprietor or tenant will employ. . . . ."

averred that the law and the practice both confined a minister to a particular place.[1]

It seems incredible that the Bishop of London could have been as uninformed regarding some of the church practices in England as he was of American conditions in general, but he plainly overlooked the fact that two kinds of licenses were issued in Great Britain for places of worship. Instead of the type with which he was familiar, the dissenters, or at least many of them, were using one which was called a "license of the place," which they procured with no difficulty. When Doddridge replied to the Bishop in defense of Davies, he explained to him this type of license, in which the question of the number of meeting houses for a minister was not even raised.

> I intirely join issue with your Lordship in thinking that the question relating to Mr. Davies is "what he has to expect on the footing of what is commonly called the Act of Toleration." I know not my Lord how far there may be something peculiar in his situation as an inhabitant of Virginia, but I have had many opportunities of knowing the practice among us, which seems so far as I can judge very agreeable to the tenor of that act. If any private persons desire to have a place licensed for religious worship after our manner, any three of them, of whom the occupant of the place should be one, signify it to the Justices at the Quarter Sessions, and the Clerk of the peace has of course their orders to give under the Seal of his Office to the persons so certifying (whose Certificate is recorded in Court), an Attestation of having done it; but this Instrument which we call the License of the place, makes no mention at all of any Minister in favor of whom it is granted. On the other hand, my Lord, our preachers are licensed on their having qualified themselves according to Law, without the least mention of their being designed for any one place more than another. If a Licensed preacher preach in an unlicensed place, or an unlicensed preacher in a place that is licensed a penalty is incurred, but where these two circum-

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Letter of Avery to Davies, 1752, ibid., p. 213. "When you certify places as designed for religious worship, you are not obliged to say who is to officiate in that place, your unnecessarily saying that has furnished the gentlemen who refuse and oppose you, with an handle."

[1] "As to Davies' case, as far as I can judge, your Attorney General is quite in the right, for the Act of Toleration confines the preachers to a particular place, to be certified and entered, and so the practice here has been; and it was so far admitted to be the case that the Dissenters obtained a clause in the 10th Queen Anne, to empower any dissenting minister to preach occasionally in any other county but that where he was licensed." From extract of Bishop of London's letter to Commissary Dawson, Dec. 25, 1750, ibid., p. 177.

> stances concur, we think ourselves quite secure, and there are few villages round about Northampton in which we have not some places thus licensed. But so far as I can judge by the fact of these Licenses which your Lordship has done me the honour of transmitting to me, the form of them is very different from ours.[1]

Perhaps one reason for the conflicting testimony is that the Bishop had in mind the ideal situation, one place of worship to each minister, which no doubt prevailed in London and other thickly settled districts, even among dissenters, and he overlooked the exceptions to it in sections where the dissenters were scattered. At any rate, even he admitted that the act of 10th Queen Anne permitted a dissenting minister to preach occasionally outside the county where he was licensed. Such an act had not been passed in Virginia, nor had the English act been taken over, and while little mention seems to have been made of it, the absence of such a provision in the Virginia law was apparently what provided the loophole for imposing restrictions not permitted in England.[2]

Davies argued that if the Act of Toleration did not permit him to preach in different counties the act of 10th Queen Anne did, though his argument is not as logical as one might expect from Davies. He held that it applied to Virginia because there was a need for it in Virginia.[3] He might have argued an even

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[1]Letter of May 14, 1751, Perry, op. cit., pp. 374-75.

[2]"Undoubtedly dissenting ministers were granted licenses wherever desired in England, but this right was secured by an act supplementing the Toleration Act, that of 10th Queen Anne. This act had not been adopted by the Virginia Assembly and the narrower limits of the Toleration Act legally applied." Eckenrode, op. cit., p. 33. What Eckenrode states without question is expressed with more reservation above because: (1) A broad interpretation of the Toleration Act permitted more than one meeting house to a preacher, as Avery pointed out to Davies in the letter cited; (2) There may have been some question as to whether this act did not apply to the colonies along with the Act of Toleration of which it was in a sense an amendment. Davies thought that it did. (3) After all, the General Court did give Davies licenses for seven meeting houses.

[3]Davies to the Bishop of London, May 21, 1752, Foote, op. cit., 188-89. "To all this, my lord, I may add, that though the Act of Toleration should not warrant my preaching in so many counties; yet, since your lordship observes, 'the dissenters obtained a clause in the 10th Queen Anne, to empower any dissenting preacher to preach occasionally in any other county but that where he was licensed;' and since the reason of the law is at least as strong here as in England, and consequently it extends hither, my conduct is sufficiently justified by it."

greater need for it in Virginia than in England as a reason for its adoption by the colonial legislature but the need for it in itself was hardly sufficient grounds for the assumption that it already extended to the colony. He might better have reasoned that the act in question had been merely a clarification of the Act of Toleration on a specific point upon which it had been silent, and that the colonial legislature's extension of the Act of Toleration to the colony carried with it any subsequent acts which had the effect of clarifying or amending it. In 1752, the Virginia legislature considered the adoption of a similar provision. This will be mentioned again in connection with other events of that year.

Various influences brought to bear.--Meanwhile, whatever may have been the opinion of various ones with regard to the above-mentioned act, influences from England must have had some effect in checking restrictive measures. Commissary Dawson, in 1750, recognized that both the Act of Toleration and the instructions of King George II were to be taken into consideration, though he believed neither had intended to accord dissenting preachers as much liberty as had been granted Davies.[1] Somebody had thought it important enough to ask Peyton Randolph for a statement of the King's instructions. Unfortunately for the Commissary's view, there is nothing in the statement limiting the number of preaching places: "You are to permit a liberty of Conscience to all persons except papists, so they be contented with a quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the same, not giving offence or scandal to the Government."[2] These instructions bear out Doddridge's view of the King's attitude, expressed to Davies: "His Majesty is so strenuous an asserter of the religious rights of all his subjects that none either in civil or ecclesiastical stations must think of recommending themselves to him by invading them."[3]

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[1]Dawson to Bishop of London, July 27, 1750, extract in Perry, op. cit., p. 366. Also in Biblical Repertory, XII, 171, and Foote, op. cit., pp. 176-77. Perry is the only one having the name of the writer. Dawson wanted the Bishop's opinion, "Whether in licensing so many houses for one teacher they have not granted him greater indulgence than either the King's instructions or the Act of Toleration intended."

[2]As quoted by Dawson in his letter to the Bishop.

[3]Letter to Davies, 1751, Foote, ibid., p. 176. Doddridge

In the same year another influence from England made itself felt in the colony, though it is not possible to say how strongly it registered. The interests of commerce often effect the cause of religion one way or another, and this time as they have generally done worked toward religious toleration. The President of the Council received the following request from the Lords of Trade:

> With regard to the affair of Mr. Davies the Presbyterian, as Toleration and a free exercise of Religion is so valuable a branch of true liberty, and so essential to the enriching and improving of a Trading Nation, it should ever be held sacred in His Majesty's Colonies; we must therefore earnestly recommend it to your care, that nothing be done which can in the least affect that great point; at the same time you will do well to admonish Mr. Davies to make proper use of that indulgence which our Laws so wisely grant to those who differ from the Established Church, and to be cautious not to afford any just cause of complaint to the Clergy of the Church of England, or to the people in General.[1]

It has been remarked in a previous chapter that Governor Dinwiddie was not consistent in his expressed attitude toward Davies, that his treatment of the latter was not always as severe as pictured in his letter to the Bishop of London. Commissary Dawson showed similar variability. Perhaps he too wanted to impress the Bishop with his zeal in curbing dissent. In one of his letters to the Bishop he dragged in a complaint against the Presbyterian leader that was so farfetched and small that it stamped him as one going out of his way to find something wrong with Davies' activities.

> I had almost forgot to mention his holding forth on workdays to great numbers of poor people who generally are his only followers. This certainly is inconsistent with the religion of labour whereby they are obliged to maintain themselves and their families; and their neglect of this duty if not seasonably prevented may in process of time be sensibly felt by the Government.[2]

The Commissary was naturally alarmed over the spread of

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also assured Davies of the favorable attitude of the Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom he had discussed Davies and his work.

[1]Letter dated Whitehall, September 1, 1750, quoted by Dawson in letter to Bishop of London, August 16, 1751, Perry, op. cit., pp. 379-80.

[2]Letter of July 27, 1750, supra, p. 189.

dissent and he could not be expected to view with complacency the powerful effectiveness of Davies's preaching, but these words are not in keeping with the spirit of fairness he exhibited at other times, and one cannot escape the impression that he was either writing for effect or had been temporarily swayed by complaints that had come to him from local clergy and was thoughtlessly repeating malicious charges. When Davies learned of the charge, which he said was "expressed in terms contemptuous enough," he promptly answered it, with his characteristic thoroughness and argumentative skill. He first slyly mentioned an argument which he said he would not use and which he classified as argumentum ad hominem. He might have answered, he said, that his people did not spend half as much time attending his meetings as the members of the Church of England spent keeping holy days. But as such a reply would be too "spiteful," he observed that since he could officiate at only one meeting-house a Sunday he had to preach to some on week-days in order to get around more than once every month or two. As this would be for any one person not more than once or twice a month, it could not interfere with work, especially with the great number of his hearers who had slaves. He wondered that there was not a clamor about some of the ways of murdering time which were more likely to be "sensibly felt by the Government." He closed with a bit of irony, in the use of which he was a master. "The Religion of Labour is held sacred among us; which are as flourishing as before their adherence to me, except that some of them have been somewhat injured by the fines and concomitant expenses imposed upon them for worshipping God inoffensively in separate assemblies."[1]

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[1]Davies did not reply directly to Dawson, as he did not know who had written the letter to the Bishop, but answered him in his letter to the Bishop. The General Court had decided to send a request to the Bishop for instructions, and the letter was sent. Strange to say, the President of the Council, Colonel Lee told Davies about it, one of those interesting and unaccountable acts of friendliness which Davies experienced in the enemy's camp at odd times. (Foote, op. cit., p. 173 and Davies's letter to the Bishop, ibid., p. 181.) He did not tell who wrote the letter, and Davies assumed that either he or Dawson or both had written it. In his letter to Doddridge (supra, p. 189), Davies attributed it to Lee, but in his letter to the Bishop he "supposed" it to have been written by Dawson. He wrote to Dawson, telling him he had been informed that Dawson wrote it and asking him about the contents, as he believed he was entitled to know what was being said about him. (Letter dated August 19, 1750, Foote, op. cit., pp.

On several occasions Dawson showed an attitude of fairness if not friendliness. Regardless of how he felt about Davies's work in sowing dissent, he gave evidence of endeavoring to grant him whatever rights were his due and of avoiding any personal animosity. When Davies and Rodgers appeared before the Court in 1748, Dawson, as a member of the Council, did not vote against the granting of licenses, and was among those who were more sympathetic toward the two young dissenters and tried to obtain a reconsideration of the case after Rodgers was refused a license.[1] Davies twice wrote of the "sincere veneration" with which he regarded the Commissary.[2] It must be remembered, however, that the Commissary was under considerable pressure from parish clergy. As will be seen, on at least one occasion he was not too precipitate in responding to their appeals. Early in 1752 he requested Davies to prepare an impartial account of the dissenters in Virginia which he could present to the Council.[3]

Letters back and forth, Davies, Doddridge, and the Bishop of London.--Davies was very much disturbed over what he feared might have been reported to the Bishop of London, and when he received no reply from Dawson to his request for information he not only prepared his own account of the situation for the Bishop as a means of speaking in his own defense, but wrote to Doddridge, expressing his anxiety and asking him to use his influence.[4]

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173-74.) When he received no reply he completed the letter he had begun to the Bishop and sent it to friends in England who were to use their discretion about presenting it. (Ibid., p. 174) Evidently it did not reach the Bishop; its contents were included in the second letter to the Bishop.

[1] Ibid., p. 166 and letter of Davies to Bishop of London, Jan. 10, 1752, ibid., p. 197.

[2] In his letter to the Bishop, ibid., p. 197, and in his address to the established clergy, ibid., p. 217.

[3] The sermon which Davies preached at Todd's ordination he afterward published, with a dedication addressed "To the Rev. Clergy of the Established Church of Virginia." In this dedication he mentioned Dawson's request and included a copy of the report he had given the Commissary, ibid., pp. 216-19.

[4] "I can't charge his Honor with designed partiality but I have the utmost reason to conclude his representation is defective. I hope, therefore, Dear Sir, you will use your interest in our behalf as far as your imperfect acquaintance with our affairs will permit." Letter of Oct. 2, 1750, Perry, op. cit., pp. 370-71.

In this letter Davies reported a serious reversal. The Council had "determined that a dissenting Minister has no right to more meeting houses than one," in consequence of which they had superseded the license given by New Kent County Court, and he feared they would confine him to one meeting place.

Although the Bishop of London did not receive the letter Davies addressed to him, he did receive one from Doddridge with which was enclosed a large extract from Davies' letter to Doddridge.

In addition to such intercession, Doddridge endeavored to help by suggesting a form of petition which might be used thereafter in applying for licenses ("Licenses of the place"). He and those he had consulted believed that if this form were used and the petition denied Davies would then have adequate grounds for complaint in the English court, which he could not have had with the type that had been previously used.[1]

Davies now learned something of the content of Dawson's letter to Bishop London. The Bishop had sent to Doddridge copies of, or extracts from, the letter he had received from the Commissary and his reply to it. Doddridge passed these on to Davies along with the Bishop's reply to his letter.[2] In both letters the Bishop shows an ignorance of conditions in America and a disposition to make loose statements about Davies and his work, thereby laying his judgment and accuracy of observation open to question even upon matters in which he was more competent to express his views, such as the British practice under the Act of Toleration. In regard to the act in question, he wrote Dawson that he agreed with the Virginia Attorney General that it confined preachers to a particular place. ". . . .and so the practice here has been; and it was so far admitted to be the case that the Dissenters obtained a clause in the 10th Queen Anne, to empower any dissenting minister to preach occasionally in any other county but that where he was licensed." He observed in a copy of a license that had

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[1] "We, A, B. C. D, being Protestant Dissenters under the denomination of Presbyterians do hereby signify to his Majesty's justices of the peace (here you must determine the words for yourself) that we intend to make use of such a place situate in such a parish as a place of publick worship, and we do hereby demand that this our certificate be registered according to law." Letter sent sometime in summer of 1751, Foote, op. cit., p. 174-76.

[2] Bishop of London to Dawson, Dec. 25, 1750; ibid. p. 177-78. Bishop to Doddridge, May 11, 1751, ibid., p. 178-80.

been sent him that it had been given for meeting-houses to be erected, and he did not see how houses not in being could be certified and registered, the implication being that dissenters should build a meeting-house and then see if they could get it registered. The purpose of the act was to "permit the Dissenters to worship in their own way," not "to permit them to set up itinerant preachers, to gather congregations where there was none before." Finally, preachers were to qualify in the county where they live; how could Davies be said to live in five different counties?

In his letter to Doddridge the Bishop was still more reckless with words and facts, and still more caustic in reference to Davies's activities. If, he wrote, you suppose the Church of England to be as corrupt as the Roman church was at the time of the Reformation, Davies and the Methodists would be justified in pursuing their methods without licenses. But if the Act of Toleration was granted only to ease the consciences of those who could not conform, how could Davies justify his conduct, who "under the colour of a toleration to his own conscience is labouring to disturb the conscience of others." "He came three hundred miles from home, not to serve people who had scruples, but to a country where the Church of England had been established from its first plantation, and where there were not above four or five dissenters within one hundred miles of it, not above six years ago." Since Davies claimed no liberties except those granted by the Act of Toleration, the question is narrowed to whether the Act justified him "in taking upon himself to be an itinerant preacher, and travelling over many counties to make converts."

As to the indictments and fines, the Bishop wrote that neither he nor his commissaries had anything to do with such repressive measures, having neither the desire nor the power; "so that if there be any ground for such complaint, the civil government only is concerned." If the good Bishop did not know the pressure being exerted by the Virginia clergy, common sense might have prompted a good guess to compensate for his ignorance.

He was greatly disturbed over the "character" which Davies's letter had given to the established clergy in Virginia. Again he advanced his lack of knowledge as an answer to alleged facts: he had no such account of the clergy of Virginia as would justify this character. But he admitted it might be so in some cases, and proceeded to give reasons that would lead one to expect

many cases: his inability to give adequate supervision to a church across the water; the people of Virginia discouraged from bringing up their children to be ministers because of the hazard and expense of sending them across the ocean to take orders; of those sent from England, many were Scotch and Irish who could get no employment at home and entered the service "more out of necessity than choice," or "to retrieve either lost fortunes or lost character." He had wanted a bishop appointed for America, but the New Englanders had opposed it, while setting up "a mission of their own for Virginia." Aside from its irrelevancy with regard to Davies, who favored an American bishop,[1] the statement showed the Bishop's ignorance of American geography and the relationship of the Hanover Presbyterians to the New York synod.

Davies's answer was a letter which in Foote's Sketches fills twenty pages and has a postscript of six pages, probably a world record for postscripts.[2] There will be no attempt here to summarize the whole of it, but only to give some of the more interesting and significant parts. Bishop Meade's opinion of it is worthy of special attention as coming from an Anglican:

> Mr. Davies's letter to the Bishop of London is like his sermons,--very long and very good. . . . .He. . . . .clearly shows that he had not violated the law as understood and acted upon in England. It certainly came to be more and more thus understood and acted upon in Virginia, until the necessity for a license was done away. . . . .[3]

After some preliminaries, he devoted a number of pages to answering the charge of itinerating. To make clear his argument he went into the history of Presbyterianism in Virginia, pictured the present situation, and presented a hypothetical description of a parallel situation in England. But it can be summarized in one sentence: itinerating, as the term was ordinarily used, meant travel-

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[1]When Davies sent to Mauduit his letter to the Bishop, he also wrote to Avery soliciting his aid. In his reply, Feb. 22, 1752, Avery expressed opposition to the appointment of an American bishop. Davies replied May 21, saying that he was still of the same opinion but would defer to Avery's judgment and did not want his letter to the Bishop to get into the latter's hands without Avery's "approbation."

[2]Op. cit., pp. 180-206. Also in The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review for 1840, XII, 175-205. Date of letter Jan. 10, 1752.

[3]Bishop (William) Meade, Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1857), I, 435.

ling about from place to place to win converts, whereas Davies's travelling was from one licensed preaching place to another, visiting the various parts of his congregation too scattered to meet in one place, or left to Davies because of the scarcity of ministers. He agreed he could not live in five counties, but questioned if that made it unlawful to officiate in them all. Perhaps his strongest argument on this issue was the contention that because of the scattered condition of the population throughout the greater part of Virginia many of the Anglican clergy were itinerants in the same sense that he was. He raised the question whether the Rev. Mr. Barrett of Hanover, with three churches in two counties and a parish sixty miles in circumference, were not a settled minister as truly as any London pastor whose people were all within a half mile of the church. The legislature had so far recognized the situation as to erect a number of "chapels of ease" in a parish, so that no family would be too far from a church, and the minister in charge of the parish gave each a proportion of his attention according to the number of people in attendance, just as Davies did with his meeting-houses. To the Bishop's charge that he "came three hundred miles from home" to gain proselytes where there were no dissenters before, he had a ready answer in the history of the Presbyterian movement in and about Hanover, and Davies made the most of it. It was true, he admitted, that gains had been made since his coming, but he asked "whether the Act of Toleration was intended to tolerate such only as were dissenters by birth and education." In his preaching he had never reasoned against the peculiarities of the Established Church or attacked her clergy. If Anglicans came to hear him preach, it was because he preached the truths which their own pastors had sworn to preach but were neglecting.[1]

The last criticism he answered in the letter proper is worth quoting because of its reference to George Whitefield and the Methodists, and its evidence of Davies's amicable spirit:

> Your lordship huddles me promiscuously with the Methodists, as though I were of their party. I am not ashamed to own that

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[1]Here Davies even puts a footnote in his letter. Having listed some of the doctrines he preached, he acknowledged his indebtedness to Doddridge, and gave the titles of some of his books which would give the Bishop a more complete survey.

> I look upon Mr. Whitefield as a zealous and successful minister of Christ; and as such to countenance him. I love him, and I love your lordship, (the profession, I hope, will not be offensive) because I hope you are both good men: and if my affection to him proves me one of his party, I hope your lordship will conclude me one of your own too: yet I am far from approving sundry steps in Mr. Whitefield's first public conduct; and I am glad to find by some of his late writings that he does not approve of them himself. The eruptions of his first zeal were, in many instances, irregular; his regulating his conduct so much by impulses, etc., was enthusiastic, and his freedoms in publishing his experience to the world, in his journals, were, in my opinion, very imprudent. As to the rest of the Methodists, I know but little of them; and, therefore, must suspend my judgment concerning them.

It will be remembered that his visit to England later made him a warm friend of Whitefield and an admirer of the Methodists, including their leaders, the Wesleys.

The postscript is a defence of the opinion he had expressed of the established clergy in Virginia. No part of the Bishop's letter had "afflicted" him so much as that which expressed concern and doubt over the "character" Davies had given them. Davies went into detail to justify his previous statement. As this has been discussed in a previous chapter and has no direct bearing on the struggle for religious freedom, nothing more need be said about it here.

Unfortunately, the letter never reached the Bishop. It would have been of interest to know the effect upon him. At least his subsequent attitude and actions would have been based upon a more complete and accurate knowledge of the situation in Virginia. Foote makes the remark that the letter is "evidence of the honesty and simplicity of Davies's heart, rather than his worldly wisdom,"[1] but the lack of worldly wisdom is not so obvious, unless by worldly wisdom Foote means a knowledge of English bishops. Davies had taken the precaution to send the letter to leading English dissenters, who were to use their judgment whether they would present it to the Bishop or not. Avery wrote to Davies[2] that on several accounts he had not thought it proper to put it into the Bishop's hands, "some relating to himself and some to yourself," but he did not say what they were, and made specific objection only to its

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[1] Op. cit., p. 206.

[2] Date not given, but it is in reply to Davies's letter of May 21, 1752, ibid., pp. 211-14.

length and its favoring the appointment of an American bishop. No doubt it was too forthright for Avery and his colleagues, but it is difficult to see how withholding it accomplished more than its presentation might have effected. From this distance (which may be too far or just far enough) it seems that its direct frankness and thoroughness, expressed with the utmost of friendliness and courtesy, made it the thing most needful for the accomplishment of its purpose. As it turned out, nothing was effected through the Bishop, though it will be remembered that when Davies was in London Dr. Stennett encouraged him to think he might obtain licenses through the Bishop of London's court. Since the responsibility for the church in Virginia was primarily in the hands of the Bishop of London, Davies's idea of appealing to the Bishop, including with the appeal a full and frank treatment of the whole situation, seems to have been not only the most legitimate but the most promising means. If it would have accomplished nothing positive it might at least have counteracted in a measure the effects of charges against Davies and his followers.[1] Even had it failed, it could scarcely have increased the damage already done, and it would not have been wasted effort, for another method would then have been the next logical step. As it was, the choice lay between going over the Bishop's head to the King in Council or using methods of evasion. As will be seen, circumstances came to favor the latter.[2]

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[1]In his letter to Avery (May 21, 1752, ibid., p. 207), Davies wrote, "Upon receiving the Doctor's (Doddridge's) letter and the extracts enclosed from the Bishop of London, I was surprised to find what unjust representations had been made of my conduct, and the circumstances of the dissenters here to his lordship; and concluded that till they were rectified we could not expect the negotiations of our friends in England in our behalf should succeed."

[2]An interesting sequel to this chain of correspondence came in a brief and somewhat piqued note from Dawson to the Bishop, consisting of little more than the following paragraph:

"Mr. Davies, the presbyterian, lately surprized me by producing extracts of a Letter from your Lordship to me, and of mine to your Lordship, and relating to himself. These he received from a friend in England to whom he has sent observations upon them; which I suppose, will be communicated to your Lordship; tho' I have not yet been favored with a sight of them."

Had he accorded Davies the courtesy of an answer to his letter, the Commissary might not have been left out. As it was, Davies's frankness in going to him with the extracts deserved some appreciation, which, it is to be hoped, was more in evidence than his letter

Attitude of Colonial authorities and Clergy of the Established Church.--From the point of view of those who believe in liberty of worship the members of the Council and House of Burgess, as well as the Governor and Commissary, were tyrannical. Burke's statement is sometimes quoted against them: "Almost all the intelligent men in the colony, and amongst the rest several who afterwards became distinguished as the champions of an unqualified freedom in every thing relating to the human mind,--and even the venerable name of Pendleton, appear in the class of persecutors; a proof that liberality and toleration are not instinctive qualities, the growth of an hour; but the result of wisdom and experience."[1] It is true that for a time there was less religious liberty in the Old Dominion than in the mother country, and it is true that some colonial officials would have imposed even greater restraints upon non-conformists. The planter aristocracy, even when not very religious, as was frequently the case, believed in upholding the establishment and curtailing all dissent, rightly fearing that equality in religious privileges would lead to other equalities. There is danger, however, of exaggerating the despotism of the Virginia authorities, and to make blanket charges that do not apply to all if they do to some. The evidence shows that these men differed in their attitude, and the more lenient disposition of some has already been mentioned. On the whole, Davies regarded them as fairminded men, who would not have been so antagonistic toward him and his followers had it not been for the false reports that came to them.

> . . . .considering the shocking reports spread abroad concerning us by officious malignants, it was no great wonder the council discovered a considerable reluctance to tolerate us. Had it not been for this, I persuade myself they would have shewn themselves the guardians of our legal privileges, as well as generous patriots to their country, which is the character generally given them.[2]

In general their intolerance was mild when compared with the bitter antagonism of certain of the clergy. Sometime during

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would indicate. Perry, op. cit., p. 383.

[1] An Account of the European Settlements, III, 121-22, quoted in Foote, op. cit., p. 166.

[2] Letter to Bellamy, June 28, 1751, Gillies, op. cit., II, 334.

1751, five of the established clergy submitted a petition to the Virginia House of Burgesses which in its language and extravagant accusation strikingly illustrates the "shocking reports" which Davies said came to the attention of the Council. Two of the signers were pastors in Hanover, Patrick Henry and Robert Barrett. They said that numerous assemblies had been held in the past "upon a pretended religious account," that sometimes "lay enthusiasts" had read to these assemblies from "sundry fanatical books," that at other times the people had been convened by "strolling pretended ministers," and at present were led by "one Mr. Samuel Davies," who had "fixed himself in Hanover," that they called themselves Presbyterians, but that they had no just claim to the title, their "ringleaders" having been excluded from the Synod of Philadelphia for "their erroneous doctrines and practices." The petition held that there was no law that permitted them to preach, and asked that the laws against them be strictly enforced, especially that entitled "ministers to be inducted."[1]

The law referred to was the one passed in 1642 providing that no minister be permitted to officiate in the colony except those ordained by some bishop in England and subscribing to the orders and constitutions of the Church of England.[2] This of course meant that the petitioners had not yet accepted the con-

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[1]Perry, op. cit., pp. 381-83. The last sentence in the above summary is derived partly from the following paragraph. The full quotation gives a better idea of the extremes to which the petition went.

"That your Petitioners further humbly conceive, that tho' these excluded Members of the Synod of Philadelphia were really Presbyterians, or of any of the other sects tolerated in England, yet there is no Law of this Colony by virtue whereof they can be entitled to a Licence to preach, far less to send forth their Emissaries, or to travel themselves over several Counties (to many places without invitation), to gain Proselytes to their way, 'to inveigle ignorant and unwary People with their Sophistry,' and under pretence of greater Degrees of Piety among them, than can be found among the Members of the Established Church, to seduce them from their lawful Teachers, and the Religion hitherto professed in this Dominion."

[2]Letter of Dawson to the Bishop of London, August 16, 1751, ibid., p. 379-81. Dawson enclosed the petition for the Bishop's perusal and gave him the facts relating to it, but expressed no opinion and made no recommendation regarding it. He mentioned a new problem faced by the establishment: many vestrymen were dissenters.

tention of Davies that the Act of Toleration extended to Virginia, although by this time it had been accepted by the colonial authorities.

The reception accorded the petition demonstrates the more tolerant attitude of the lay officers, and perhaps of the Commissary as well. Thus it bears out Davies's belief that they would have been more lenient but for the pressure exerted by "officious malignants." The petition was sent to Dawson to present, but it went no further, after he consulted some of the members of the assembly, who expressed the opinion that the Act of Toleration restrained them from granting the request.

Changes in 1752.--The year 1752 saw some improvements in Davies's position and some checks. For the first time he was permitted another licensed minister as assistant. This was decidedly a step forward. What had been refused John Rodgers was now granted John Todd, though he was merely licensed as an assistant to Davies in ministering at the seven meeting houses already licensed. The General Court refused to license any more places of worship for dissenters. This was in April, though Todd was not installed until November 12th.[1] The coming of Todd enabled Davies to divide up the territory and confine his own ministrations to the more immediate vicinity of Hanover, and thus he hoped to end accusations of itinerating.[2] He planned to turn over four of the seven

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[1] Foote, op. cit., p.. 216. The year is given as 1762, obviously a typographical error for 1752. Davies, in letter to Avery, May 21, 1752, ibid., p. 208, wrote: "I waited on the Governor and Council about a month ago, in company with one of my brethren, the Rev. Mr. John Todd who applied to their Honours to be qualified to officiate in and about Hanover county, as my assistant; and with much difficulty our petition was granted. But they refused to license any more meeting-houses, where either of us might officiate occasionally, in such places as are inconvenient to the meeting-houses already licensed." Cf. Dawson's account, letter to the Bishop, Perry, op. cit., p. 384.

[2] "I have strong expectation Mr. Todd will settle in Hanover to relieve me of a part of my charge, which I hope will prove a happy providence to this colony, and particularly to the dissenters, as he is a pious, prudent youth, and a very popular preacher; and his settlement will tend in a great measure to remove the odium that has been unjustly flung upon me as an itinerant, because of my officiating at so many places." Letter to Avery, Foote, op. cit., p. 208.

places to Todd.

While one point was thus gained, another was being refused. Davies summarized the situation at this stage in these words:

> . . . .whether a dissenting congregation that is very much dispersed, and cannot meet at one place, may claim a right by virtue of said act [Act of Toleration], to have a plurality of places licensed for the convenience for the sundry parts of the congregation? and whether it allows a dissenting minister to divide his labours among two congregations at sundry meetinghouses when by reason of the scarcity of ministers each congregation cannot be furnished with one? I hope, sir, all occasion for the latter will be removed by Mr. Todd's settlement, but the former will still continue; as the dissenters, Mr. Todd's congregation and mine, cannot be accommodated without a plurality of meetinghouses. . . . .But there is a number of dissenters in four or five places who cannot obtain ministers of their own, nor attend on our ministry at the places licensed already, by reason of distance; and they are very desirous to have houses licensed among them, where any qualified dissenting minister whom they shall invite, may officiate occasionally.[1]

Narrowed to one issue.--It will be observed from the above quotations that a change had taken place with regard to what constituted itinerating from the point of view of the government. Davies expected to be free now from the charge of itinerating although he was to retain three meeting places. He was to have three and Todd was to have four, but Davies hoped that now all occasion would be removed for questioning whether the law "allows a dissenting minister to divide his labours among two congregations at sundry meeting houses." The time had come when several dissenting meetinghouses within the same county were regarded as belonging to the same congregation.[2] This was acknowledged by the Governor in June of the same year, when he reported the instructions he had given Davies: "I told Him that the Church of Scotland allowed of no pluralities, and therefore if he would confine himself to one Meetinghouse or to the limits of a County, he should meet with all the protection and indulgence the Act of Toleration allows, while he continued peaceable and quiet."[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 209.

[2] Each of the two men would still have more than one county, but evidently Davies hoped they would be sufficiently limited to come within the spirit of the requirement.

[3] Letter of Dinwiddie to Bishop of London, June 5, 1752, Perry, op. cit., p. 396.

About the same time Commissary Dawson made the same concession, Although the letter containing it objected to Davies's extensive movements as much as ever, his statement in this regard was exceptionally generous:

> I am not against granting Dissenters a legal Indulgence. If it be asked, 'what is a legal indulgence,' I answer a Teacher's Settlement within the limits of a parish and a License to have as many Meeting houses, as the convenience of the people within the said limits may require.[1]

This narrowed the issue to the question of crossing parish or county lines. It was a concession made because of existing conditions and against his judgment of what was generally best for the church and for the people. He admitted that in the establishment there were "pluralities or clergymen who hold two Benefices with the Cure of Souls," but it was a practice "justly condemned." He did not see how a "teacher" with seven, eight, or ten meeting houses could give the people the attention they needed for their "spiritual welfare," and he elaborated upon this thought.

The last-named observation of the Commissary was rather pointless, having been made after Todd had been licensed. Davies would have been glad to concentrate on one congregation in one place of worship. He regarded his present arrangement as only temporary, and exerted himself to the utmost to obtain other ministers with whom to divide the territory. Yet the old inconsistancy of his opponents persisted in that, as Davies said, it was "with much difficulty" that the petition for Todd's licensure was procured.

At this time the colonial legislature was considering a new bill, perhaps for the purpose of clarifying a somewhat ambiguous situation. On the one hand, the power of the dissenters was growing and their demands and complaints were worrying the establisment and the authorities. Dawson reported that Davies had "in truth occasioned a great deal of uneasiness to the Government," that the dissenters were endeavoring to obtain exemption from the

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[1] Letter to the Bishop of London, spring of 1752, ibid., p. 385. With the letter, Dawson enclosed a copy of a letter Davies had written to him, observations on it, and a copy of a petition of Davies to the General Court. He also mentioned that the dissenters were endeavoring at that time to obtain exemption from the payment of parochial levies, p. 386.

parochial levies, that he had received letters from New York and London informing him that "Dissenters complain of hardship, oppression, and persecution in this Colony, and threaten to transmit their Complaints to England." It was perhaps all this that led the legislature to consider inserting in the bill a clause that would incorporate the English provision in the 10th Queen Anne, "empowering," so Dawson wrote, "a teacher to officiate in my Congregation altho' it be not in the County where he was qualified." On the other hand, the primary purpose of the bill was to restrict "itinerating." The question Dawson was putting to the Bishop was "whether a dissenting Teacher ought to be confined to the Bounds of a parish." "To put them under due restraint is the real intent of the Bill." For that reason Dawson wanted a proviso added that a teacher who officiated in a congregation "be a settled Teacher of such Congregation." "Otherwise, . . . . one teacher may and would ramble all over a Country, and the grievance complained of would not be redressed."[1]

Failure of certain measures.--In April, 1752, Davies following the advice given him by Doddridge, applied for "a license of the place." He drew up a certificate in the form the latter had recommended, and gave it to the clerk of the General Court to be presented to the Court. In Davies's presence the clerk asked the judgment of the Governor and some of the Council, and they said that it would be useless to present it as they would grant no more licenses until they received instruction from England in response to inquiries they had made. Another certificate was presented to a county court and rejected. Yet another would have been presented to the General Court if Davies had not advised against it. As Doddridge had expressed the opinion that the refusal to issue a license of the kind requested would be a just ground for complaint in the English court, Davies now took the next logical step and sent Avery an exact copy of the certificate used in the petition and a statement of the facts, so that he might take action if he judged it expedient.[2] Doddridge had died in October, 1751.

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[1] Ibid., p. 384. When Dawson wrote "my congregation" he had in mind his as typical of any. "Country" is no doubt a misprint for "County."

[2] The letter has been referred to a number of times in pre-

Avery advised against legal action in England until other means failed. It would necessitate an appeal to the King and Council, but this would involve considerable difficulty, delay, and expense. He had obtained from the British Attorney General, Sir Dudley Rider, an opinion favorable toward a plurality of meeting houses, and he enclosed this statement with the suggestion that it be shown to the Governor and Council before further requests were made of them.[1]

In June of the following year, Davies produced Sir Dudley Ryder's opinion when he applied for a license for a meeting house in St. Peter's parish, the place formerly licensed by the justices of New Kent, whose order had been superseded by the General Court. Apparently it had no effect upon the Court. In the words of Thomas Dawson, who had succeeded his deceased brother as Commissary, "How-

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ceding pages, and contains all the facts given in the paragraph (except the last sentence), dated May 21, 1752, Foote, op. cit., p. 210.

[1]Letter of Avery to Davies, date not given, ibid., p. 211-14. John Holt served as Davies's messenger in connection with some of the correspondence with British dissenters, and one of the letters to Holt reveals some of Davies's precautions. In his letter to Avery, Davies said that he had sent to Mr. Mauduit the letter addressed to the Bishop, and Mauduit was to pass it on to Avery and Doddridge. They were to decide if it should go to the Bishop, and if so, what corrections, if any, should be made. When Davies wrote to Holt on September 12, 1751, Holt was planning to go to England, and Davies was committing some letters to his care. The letter to the Bishop was not ready yet, for it bears the date, January 10, 1752, but very likely Davies sent letters at this time preparing the way for it. He wrote to Holt, "I commit two letters to your care, one to Dr. Doddridge, and one to Mr. Mauduit. Upon your arrival in London, please to write a few lines along with mine to Dr. Doddridge, informing him where to find you that he may commit his answer to your care, which you may conduct to me by the first opportunity, enclosed in a paper directed to Mr. John Thomson or Mr. John Dixon (to prevent suspicions) or if a safe opportunity does not occur 'till you return, bring it yourself." (The latter part of this quotation is omitted from the copy of the letter in the Evangelical and Literary Magazine, II, 539-43.) Holt must have found a safe way to send the answer, for in Davies letter to Avery, May 21, 1752, he wrote, "I have been so happy as to receive yours of February 22d, about a fortnight ago by Mr. Holt. I also received last December the letter you mentioned from the Rev. Dr. Doddridge, informing me of the sentiments of the Lord Bishop of London on my affairs, and giving his advise and yours how to proceed." MS letters, Davies to Holt, in possession of Library Co. of Philadelphia.

ever the Govr. and council positively refused him."[1]

The Bishop hesitates.--The act which the legislature was considering remained unpassed in 1753 and in 1754, waiting for instructions from the Bishop of London. This kept matters pretty much at a standstill. The dissenters were permitted to retain their seven licensed meeting places, but were granted no more. Evidently the Bishop was on the fence. He had confessed his ignorance on the matter to Doddridge in 1751: "You will observe in the extract from my letter, that I promised to take the opinion of lawyers upon the case; but I have not done it; which I tell you that you may not think I have an opinion and conceal it from you."[2] Perhaps he was still hunting for a lawyer. Commissary William Dawson asked him for a statement of his opinion in 1752. He was "humbly desiring and waiting for" the Bishop's "determination of this question, whether a dissenting Teacher ought to be confined to the Bounds of a parish?"[3] Governor Dinwiddie, in the same year, after telling the Bishop about Davies's activities closed with the request that he would "observe the great necessity" of his "directions and advice."[4] In 1753, Commissary Thomas Dawson took up the refrain: "I hope before our next session of assembly to have your Lordship's opinion of the Several matters transmitted to your Lordship relating to this gentleman Davies and sincerely glad should I be to see that uniformity of religion restored, for which this Colony was once famous; and peace and quietness established among us."[5] In 1754, he was still waiting for instructions, and sent the Bishop a reminder that he had written the year before telling of "the unreasonable application of the dissenting teachers for greater indulgences," and had received no reply. He therefore earnestly begged that his Lordship consider the information sent by him and his brother before him and favor him with his direc-

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[1]Thomas Dawson to the Bishop of London, Perry, op. cit., p. 407.

[2]Letter to Doddridge, May 11, 1751, Foote, op. cit., p. 179.

[3]Date not given, but contents show it to have been written in late spring of 1752, Perry, op. cit., p. 384.

[4]Letter of June 5, 1752, ibid., p. 396

[5]Letter of July 23, 1753, ibid., p. 407.

tions.[1] If a reply came it was too late to have much effect one way or another, because other troubles were soon to absorb the attention of both clergy and government to the exclusion of any consideration of further restrictions of liberties for the Presbyterians.

The attitude of the new Commissary gave promise of trouble for the dissenters, if his letter to the Bishop was truly representative of his views. He had a low opinion of the dissenters and their teachers, and his intentions boded no good for them:

> An act of the assembly to restrain these teachers. . . . .I have much at heart. . . . .The Govr. shews these teachers no countenance and your Lordship may be assured that I shall use my best, tho' weak, endeavours to restrain them, but I am afraid notwithstanding our utmost care, that these ignes fatui will lead many especially the lowest and most ignorant sort to ruin and destruction. May it please God to deliver us from all false doctrine, Heresy and Schism.[2]

Fortunately for the dissenters, he came upon the scene too late to make his intolerant designs effective, even if he had the power.

Various Factors combine to bring victory.--This brings the chain of events to the point where it was ready for the link forged by Davies and British dissenters during and immediately following his trip to England. It will be remembered that the committee of dissenters in England advised Davies that if licenses were still refused the meeting houses for which they were applied should be used as if the licenses had been granted, and then if any persons were prosecuted for using such places for worship they were to appeal to the King in Council and the British committee would prosecute the appeal.

After Davies's return from England everything combined to favor his cause. Opposition flared up in spots, particularly in the Northern Neck, but in general restrictions were so relaxed that Davies never took the case to the King in Council. Authorities became lenient as a matter of policy or because of their absorption in other matters. Among the various factors which

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[1]Letter of March 11, 1754, ibid., p. 409.

[2]Letter of July 23, 1753, ibid., p. 407. One bit of evidence indicates that Thomas Dawson may have become friendly toward Davies later. The New York Public Library has a copy of The Charter, Transfer and Statutes, of the College of William and Mary, in Virginia: In Latin and English (Williamsburg: William Hunter, 1758), which contains the following inscription: "Saml Davies The Gift of the Revd Dr. Dawson President of the College of Wm. and Mary."

brought about this favorable situation for the Presbyterians were the following: the increase in the number of the dissenters and their consequent increase in strength and influence; the increase in the number of Presbyterian ministers settled in Virginia; the comparatively high caliber of the Presbyterian ministry and preaching; the general unrest caused by the French and Indian War and the absorption of the authorities in problems of defence; the help of the dissenters in bearing the brunt of the war; the patriotic preaching of Davies, and his aid in enlisting recruits in the militia and heightening the morale of the soldiers; the established clergy's sudden decline in popular favor.

During Davies's absence the revival lagged in Virginia, but upon his return it enjoyed a new lease on life[1] and the New Side Presbyterians increased in numbers, became better organized, and for the first time acquired something approaching a sufficient number of leaders. This new phase of the revival was stimulated by the arrival of Whitefield in Virginia, for his third visit, in 1755, about the same time Davies returned from England. After Todd's settlement in Virginia as Davies's assistant, came Robert Henry and John Wright, so that by 1755 Davies had three others to share his field with him, while John Brown and Alexander Craighead were beginning their work in counties farther west.[2] Toward the end of the year the Presbytery of Hanover was formed. For the years 1755 and 1756, Davies and his colleagues report large meetings and many additions to their flocks. In 1757, Davies and Todd began to make preaching excursions into the Northern Neck, where the Established Church was particularly deficient. Licenses were granted Davies in the Northern Neck this same year by the courts in Northumberland and Lancaster counties. The latter was rescinded

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[1] Commissary Thomas Dawson wrote to the Bishop of London that "the New Lights seemed to be in a declining condition during the absence of Mr. Davies, but upon his return they revived,--at least they make much noise." Dawson MSS, August 13, 1755, and Fulham transcripts, Box I, no. 176 (Va.), quoted by Wesley M. Gewehr in The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1930), p. 91.

[2] Supra, chap. iv.

the following year, and the court of Westmoreland County refused to issue a license on the ground that the Act of Toleration did not extend to America, but in Lancaster, at least, the meeting house was built and preaching services were held, license or no license.[1] Davies's practice shows that he was following the advice of the committee of British dissenters, that he apply first to the county court for a license and that if refused he should go ahead and use the place applied for as though it had been licensed. He departed from the course advised in that he omitted the second and third steps, applying to the General Court and then, in case of refusal, to the Governor, but his experience told him these steps would have been useless.

As in the earlier days at Hanover, various means were attempted for the curtailment of the growing Presbyterian power in the Northern Neck. Col. James Gordon tells that one of the parsons endeavored to make it "a scandalous thing" to attend the Presbyterian meetings, and this kept many away who would otherwise have gone.[2] Col. Edwin Conway was perhaps the most persistant opponent of Davies in this region. He charged that Davies had circulated a pamphlet among the negroes reproaching Virginia and encouraging the negroes to recognize their superior strength in numbers. He drew up a petition to the Assembly proposing that the dissenters "be Laid under Proper Restrictions," but secured only two signatures besides his own, and there is no evidence that he presented it. He tried in vain to prevent the building of the Presbyterian meeting house. In spite of all efforts to check them, the Presbyterians grew, until in 1762 James Waddell was settled as pastor of the Lancaster and Northumberland churches.[3]

Improvement in organization and increase in communicants, congregations, and leaders made the Presbyterians formidable enough to give some pause to those who might wish to check them,

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[1] Gewehr, op. cit., pp. 93-94. Foote, op. cit., p. 354.

[2] Journal of Col. James Gordon, in William and Mary College Quarterly, XI, cited by Gewehr, ibid., p. 95.

[3] Gewehr, ibid., pp. 96-97. For the Conway facts, Gewehr cites Conway to Dawson, March 3, 1758, Dawson MSS. As Gewehr suggests, the reference of Conway was probably to Davies's pamphlet The Duty of Christians to propagate their religion among Heathens . . . . . , and it "was certainly not of an inflamatory nature." Cf. supra, p. 140.

though the desire for checking them would be increased by this growth. Success gains a momentum that discourages its opponents and heartens its adherents. The position of the Presbyterians was strengthened still more in 1758 when the Old Side and New Side united, forming the Synod of New York and Philadelphia.

Popular opinion was a strong determining factor in releasing the dissenters from restrictions. The preaching of Davies and his colleagues attracted great crowds, and they were admired not only for their preaching but for their characters and leadership. This can be said particularly of Davies and Todd, later of Waddell.[1] As their following grew there must have been many loyal members of the Establishment who recognized the comparative deficiency of their own pastors. One of these wrote a letter to the Bishop of London in which he described Davies and Todd as "men of considerable learning, strictly virtuous and of exemplary lives." "I wish I could inform your Lordship," he added, "that all your Clergy are equally qualified, but the case is far otherwise, with respect to some." He then mentioned by name some of the latter, one of whom was "one of the most ignorant men" he had "ever conversed with," another "both ignorant and immoral to a Scandalous Degree," another "remarkable only for his ignorance and folly." He acknowledged that there were "indeed men of Piety and literature in the Chh," but those he named and others he might have mentioned were a reproach to religion, and his zeal for religion as professed in the Church of England led him to add that "it is easy to determine whether the interest of the Church or that of the dissenters is most likely to prevail here, where the former is promoted by some of the weakest and most worthless men, and the latter by men of sufficient learning adorned with piety and virtue." He closed by stating the purpose of his letter, which was to have these men removed and to prevent such men from getting into orders in the future.[2]

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[1]Foote has a whole chapter on James Waddell, the blind preacher, whose fame as a pulpit orator was second only to that of Davies in Virginia. The chapter contains portions of the journal of Colonel Gordon, who greatly admired Waddell and supported his work in the Northern Neck. Foote, op. cit., chap. xvi.

[2]Letter unsigned, dated Feb. 1, 1754, Perry, op. cit., pp. 408-09.

To what extent ministers of the Establishment appeared in such unfavorable light to their parishioners, in comparison with dissenting ministers, and to what extent, as a result, the contrast led to a general attitude in favor of toleration is impossible to say, but by the time of Davies's return it must have been strong enough at least to serve as an introduction to the situation which grew out of the "Parsons' Cause."

The Established clergy were paid in tobacco, the salary for each being 16,000 pounds. In 1755, the burdens of war and the shortage of the tobacco crop led the Legislature to pass an act providing that in all cases where tobacco was stipulated as payment money might be substituted at the rate of two pence per pound of tobacco. This rated tobacco at its usual value, and its purpose was "to enable the inhabitants of this colony to discharge their Tobacco debts in money for the present year." "The Two-penny Act," as it was dubbed, was re-enacted in 1758. This meant that a minister of the Established Church would receive a salary of little more than £133 instead of about £400, the value that year of 16,000 pounds of tobacco. Little had been said against the law when first enacted, but its re-enactment brought loud complaint from the clergy. There was some justice in their complaint, in view of the fact that they had suffered marked diminution of salary when tobacco was cheap, but so had many others, in a colony where tobacco growing was almost the sole industry and where its price was the chief determining factor in the rise and fall of all income values. To Davies a salary of £133 plus the use of a glebe house and land would have seemed affluence. Technically, the clergy had just cause for complaint, but practically they were in error in refusing to bear their part in the general suffering of the time. The Rev. James Maury, in whose name the suit was afterward filed in the "Parsons' Cause," showed a more sacrificial spirit at the time the Two Tenny Act was passed. "In my own case," he said, ". . . .the difference amounts to a considerable sum. However, each individual must expect to share in the misfortunes of the community to which he belongs."[1]

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[1] Memoirs of Huguenot Family, p. 402, quoted by Charles Campbell, History of the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1860), p. 508.

These relief acts were not intended to place special burdens upon the clergy but to ease the burdens of the people at a time of economic distress. Various public levies and the fees of many public officers were also payable in tobacco, and the property of delinquents might be sold at auction. In 1758, the year the second Two Penny Act was passed, the total output of tobacco for the colony did not average two hundred pounds for each taxpayer. Many landlords and civil officers who were members of the assembly that year supported the measure in spite of the fact that their rents and fees were payable in tobacco.[1]

Even if all arguments had been on their side, the clergy would have done wisely to have accepted their losses with a good grace, for the people, distracted over the dangers of war and burdened with its heavy loads at a time when they were least able to bear them, were in no mood to be patient with the complaints of those who were supposed to minister to them.

A bitter war of words ensued in the press, until public opposition to the clergy became so great that no Virginia printer would publish their protests. The feeling against them reached a climax when they appealed to the King in Council. The King annulled the act, August 10, 1759, but as his decision was not retroactive it was too late to be of any effect, as the law was only a temporary measure, to hold for one year. To recover their losses the parsons now resorted to the courts. The dramatic contest in favor of the dissenting ministers was heightened by the fact that the series of lawsuits culminated at Hanover Courthouse. It was here in December, 1763, that Patrick Henry as defence attorney made the impassioned address to the jury which was to bring him into prominence and was one of the first public utterances to attack the interference of the British King in the affairs of the colonies. The jury, three or four of whom were said to have been "New Lights," brought in a verdict of one penny damages for the plaintiff.[2] The Anglican clergy were now completely discredited in the eyes of the populace and colonial government, and a long step was taken toward the complete separation of church and state

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[1] Ibid., pp. 508-14.

[2] Ibid., pp. 514-18.

after the Revolution.

Although this intensified opposition to the clergy of the Established Church came after Davies's departure from the colony, its beginnings were in evidence while he was still there. It was particularly unfortunate for the Establishment that its ministers' actions were in such marked contrast to those of the dissenting ministers, when the ravages and perils of war were spreading panic throughout the Old Dominion. Naturally it was the dissenters, who inhabited the western counties, who bore the brunt of the attacks. Some fled, especially the more isolated and exposed. Alexander Craighead and his congregation were among these.[1] Most of them, however, stood their ground, and their pastors not only encouraged them but led them in taking defence measures. Among these was one of the leading Old Side ministers, Rev. John Craig, pastor of a church in Augusta county. When some of his congregation wanted to flee to safer territory, he opposed it as evidence of cowardice and lack of faith, and urged the building of a chain of small forts, each to hold twenty or thirty families. "They required me to go before them in the work, which I did cheerfully, though it cost me one-third of my estate." His church comprised one of the forts, and in less than two months his congregation "was well fortified."[2]

The leader, however, in calming the fears of the people and stirring them to resist was Samuel Davies. When he arrived home from England he found that Indian attacks on the frontier had already begun and alarm had spread even to the eastern part of the colony. The French and Indian War had begun the summer before. A force of Virginians under Washington had been defeated by a superior number of French and Indians. This had encouraged the Indians to attempt the recovery of some of the territory that had been wrested from them by the white settlers.[3] Davies arrived

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[1]Richard Webster, A History of the Presbyterian Church in America ( Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1857), p. 437; Foote, op. cit., p. 283.

[2]William Henry Foote, Sketches of Virginia, Series II (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1856), p. 32. The original manuscript of Craig's journal is at Montreal.

[3]Foote, op. cit., Series I, pp. 281-82. For a more detailed account of the war events, see Campbell, op. cit., chap. lx.

at Hanover on February 15, 1755, and March 5th, a day set aside by the legislature for fasting and prayer, preached a sermon on "God the Sovereign of All Kingdoms," the first of the war sermons which were to contribute so powerfully to a fame and popularity already extensive. Marshalling the full force of his logic and eloquence, he demonstrated from Biblical and historical events the rule of God over people and nations, the saving power of God in time of crisis. He called upon his people to trust God for victory, to confess their sins and the sins of their land, which had brought these evils upon them. But they had "no ground for a lazy confidence in divine Providence." God controlled through secondary causes, and those who wanted His help must permit Him to use them. The conclusion was an appeal for action.

> . . . .let us arouse ourselves, and be active. Let us cheerfully pay the taxes the government has laid upon us to support this expedition. Let us use our influence to diffuse a military spirit around us. I have no scruple thus openly to declare, that such of you whose circumstances allow of it, may not only lawfully enlist and take up arms, but that your so doing is a Christian duty, and acting an honourable part, worthy of a man, a freeman, a Briton, and a Christian.[1]

On July 10, General Braddock suffered his disastrous defeat. The whole colony was thrown into a panic, as the Indians increased the ferocity and daring of their assaults upon the frontier settlements and the survivers of the battle told their stories of savage barbarities. On the 20th Davies preached a sermon on the defeat of Braddock, using as the text Isaiah 22: 12-14, the prophet lamenting over the wickedness and suffering of his country. Davies found a striking parallel in that the Jews had made some preparation for their defence but not enough, had depended solely upon it without calling upon God for His help and placing their trust primarily in Him, and in the face of their danger were "sunk in security, luxury, and wickedness." His first plea was for repentence. He believed that both the drought and the ravages of war were visited upon the country in punishment for its wickedness. He called upon his people to lament over their own sins and the sins of their country and to "cry aloud

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[1]Samuel Davies, Sermons (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1864), III, sermon LXX, 329-54. Text: Dan. 4: 25.

to God" for His forgiveness and mercy. Prayer for mercy and help was the first requisite, armament the second.

> Secondly, let me earnestly recommend it to you to furnish yourselves with arms, and to put yourselves in a posture of defence. . . . .Christians should be patriots. What is that religion good for that leaves men cowards upon the appearance of danger? And permit me to say, that I am particularly solicitous that you, my brethren of the dissenters, should act with honour and spirit in this juncture as it becomes loyal subjects, lovers of your country, and courageous Christians.

He added that had he consulted his own safety he would have moved to Great Britain or the northern colonies, where he had had "very inviting offers." He was determined to remain as long as there was any prospect of defending the country.

With regard to the restrictions that had been placed upon dissenters, he expressed a prophetic hope and urged his people to merit generous treatment by their conduct.

> I also hope, that our rulers will find something else to do, in the present state of our country, than to harass and oppress a number of harmless dissenters, whose only crime it is to follow their conscience and not the direction of their superiors in matters of religion. Nay, I am persuaded that many of them, upon farther acquaintance with us, will be disposed to more moderate measures by their own innate candour and a spirit of liberty. Let us therefore show ourselves worthy of protection and encouragement, by our conduct on this occasion.

Davies next turned to his negro parishioners. With 120,000 negroes in the colony,[1] the white population feared the slaves would take the war as an opportunity for rebellion. Davies warned them that their lot would be much worse under French and Papist domination.

He closed by pointing out reasons why they should not be "too much discouraged," and bidding them to expect hardship and suffering regardless of the outcome. "And what is that religion good for, that will not support a man under trials?" Like the "blood, sweat, and tears" address of a modern leader, it was a stirring appeal to prepare for war and for suffering, to face the future with the will to resist and endure.[2]

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[1] Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed. Vol. 28, p. 123, gives this as total number in 1756 out of a population of 292,000.

[2] Sermons, 1864 ed., op. cit., III, 307-28. "Davies afterwards became famous for the powerful eloquence with which he stirred up the hearts of the Virginians in the war against the French and Indians, when they were panic-stricken by the defeat and death

The first two or three years of the war were marked with blunders and defeats, and Davies found it necessary to preach more sermons like the one described, comforting and encouraging, exhorting to repentance and prayer, stimulating the will to fight on. Eight of his war sermons have been published, and some of his other published sermons touch upon the war. If his unpublished sermons ran in about the same proportion, which is likely, it meant a rather continuous campaign.

Not all of these sermons were delivered solely to his own people. Following Braddock's defeat the first volunteer company to be organized in the colony was raised in Hanover county. To this company, under Captain Samuel Overton, Davies was asked to preach, on August 17, 1755. He preached on the text, "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people,. . . . ." (2 Sam. 10: 12) on the subject, "Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of Good Soldiers."[1] The sermon was a recipe for courage and an incitement to have it.

As the war dragged on it became necessary to call for more volunteers, and Davies preached at a general muster for the purpose of raising a company for Captain Samuel Meredith, May 8,

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of General Braddock." James S. M. Anderson, The History of the Church of England in the Colonies and Foreign Dependencies of the British Empire, 2d ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1856), III, 134. ". . . .and even the idea of abandoning a part of the Colony of Virginia to the enemy had been suggested. . . . .It was apprehended that the negroes might join the Indians and French; and Mr. Davies, who had perhaps more influence with them than any other person, exerted himself to the utmost to prevent such a movement." William Buell Sprague Annals of the American Pulpit (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1858), III, 142. "The influence of his war sermons appears to have been irresistible: and an examination of them might be advantageous to those who may be called to address soldiers." Foote, op. cit., Series I, p. 295.

[1] Ibid., pp. 94-119. Foote, op. cit., Series I, pp. 283-84. In this sermon he pointed to the recruits as sparks of martial fire such as he hoped God was to diffuse through the country. When he published the sermon he added this footnote, which has been quoted a number of times as evidence of his prophetic insight and ability to judge human character: "As a remarkable instance of this, I may point out to the public, that heroic youth, Col. Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner, for some important service to his country."

1758. It was not a pacifist sermon. He preached on "The Curse of Cowardice," from the text, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully; and cursed by he that keepeth back his sword from blood." He divided his efforts between commendation for the men who had enlisted and exhortation to further enlistment, reminding the crowd that "Hanover had the honour of sending out the first company of volunteers that were raised in the colony." He appealed to one motive after another, heaping up argument and incentive, to encourage enlistment, and those who failed to respond must have found it difficult to avoid the feeling that a curse was upon them. At the close of the sermon, so many came forward to enlist that many were turned away after the company's roster was filled.[1]

The influence of Davies's sermons was not limited to the range of his voice. Several of them were printed in pamphlet form during the war, and some were reprinted. The sermon which he preached to Captain Overton's company was published before the year (1755) was ended, and two more editions appeared the following year. The Curse of Cowardice was reprinted at least four times in 1759.[2]

No wonder Davies was permitted to carry on his work unmolested. As Foote well says, "The Attorney General could scarcely venture to throw impediments in the path of the best recruiting officer in the province."[3]

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[1]The sermon is in Sermons, 1864 ed., op. cit., pp. 147-66. The last statement above is on the authority of John H. Rice (Evangelical and Literary Magazine, II, 360) who adds that the regiment followed Davies to the tavern where he went to get his horse, and in response to their wishes he spoke to them from the tavern porch until he was exhausted. The tavern is still in use, across the street from the courthouse. In reference to Davies's war sermons, Rice tells (ibid., pp. 359-60): "We have conversed with aged friends, who remember well these times, and the despondency and consternation, which then pervaded the colony. They were themselves at the meetings of the people, when Davies preached these sermons; and they represent in lively terms, the dejection and gloom depicted on every countenance. . . . .And they say that as the preacher poured forth the strains of his eloquence, his own spirit was transfused into his hearers, the cheek that was blanched with fear reddened, and the drooping eye kindled with martial fires. . . . ." Eyewitnesses told him that a passage from the above-mentioned sermon "was most powerful" in its effect.

[2]See bibliography.

[3]Op. cit., Series I, p. 296.

It is highly probable that Governor Dinwiddie was one of the first to recognize the value of Davies's help in the defence of the colony, and consequently one of the first to abandon restrictions on his activity. Notice has already been taken of his generous act toward Davies in recommending him in letters sent to Scotland before Davies's arrival there on his mission. That was before the war broke out. Dinwiddie took the initiative in movements to put the colony in a state of military preparedness and to oppose the encroachments of the French. He met with considerable opposition and delay, and he must have appreciated help from any quarter. At any rate, there is no indication of his endeavoring to hinder Davies after the latter's return from Europe.

When Francis Fauquier succeeded Dinwiddie as Lieutenant Governor, in 1758, Davies and Wright waited upon him with an address from the Presbytery of Hanover, assuring him of their loyalty and their desire to stimulate the people to a defence of their liberties in the war against France, and requesting that he "would secure and continue to them the peaceable and unmolested enjoyment of the Liberties and Immunities of the Act of Toleration." In reply, he expressed pleasure at their assurances, and in turn promised them his support: "The Presbytery may be assured, that I shall always exert myself to support the Act of Toleration, and secure the peaceful Enjoyment of its Immunities to all his Majesty's Subjects who conform thereto."[1] This was not a promise to grant them liberties not permitted before, but at least the emphasis was upon the positive and tolerant side, without the old warnings and threatenings, and there is no record of his attempting to restrict the dissenters.

Thus a number of factors combined to secure for the Presbyterians the liberties they asked, and even more than they had asked, for some of them preached wherever they pleased without a license and were unmolested.[2] Wright, in a letter dated August 18, 1755, wrote that he observed among the people generally a

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[1] MS Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, meeting of Sept. 27, 1758.

[2] Rev. Patrick Henry complained of Todd and Wright preaching where they were not licensed. Dawson MSS, date mutilated, cited by Gewehr, op. cit., footnote, pp. 98,99.

different attitude toward the New-Light clergy, and added, "I now preach any where, being so distant from the metropolis, and the time being so dangerous and shocking."[1]

Davies's spirit and subsequent work of Presbytery.--The spirit of Davies lived on in the Presbytery after he left the colony and even after his departure from this earth. It cannot be said that the Presbytery of Hanover would have done nothing toward the achieving of religious liberty if Davies had never been a member of it, but undoubtedly the powerful influence of his leadership of those early years when he was struggling for religious toleration survived in his colleagues and did much to pave the way for the part the Presbytery took in the final step. During and immediately following the Revolution, when the legislature considered preserving in the new state some vestiges of an established church, the Presbyterians and Baptists opposed it. The Baptists circulated petitions and brought them before the legislature with thousands of signatures; both Baptists and Presbyterians drew up a succession of memorials which they presented to the legislature, and both sent their ablest men to lobby at the capital and to speak before the legislature. Rev. John B. Smith, President of Hampden-Sidney College, and one of a committee sent by the Presbytery of Hanover, spoke on three successive days before the committee of the whole house against a bill for a general assessment for the support of religion. The committee of the whole voted against the bill and followed this action by recommending Jefferson's bill for establishing religious freedom, which the legislature then passed, December 17, 1785.[2] Out of Virginia came the move for incorporating into the federal constitution the complete separation of church and state. Without detracting from the credit due Madison, Jefferson, and Henry, perhaps a little credit for that should go to the man who for a number of years fought almost single-handed for religious toleration and whose

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[1]Foote, op. cit., Series I, p. 308. This was in Cumberland county, where a license had been refused, Foote, Series II, p. 54.

[2]Ibid., Series I, chap. xv. For Baptist efforts see Charles J. James, Documentary History of the Struggle for Religious Liberty in Virginia (Lynchburg, Va.: J. P. Bell Co., 1900). Appendix has copies of Baptist and Presbyterian memorials.

liberty-loving spirit long survived him in the Presbytery and colony.[1]

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[1] "The slight sketch which we have given of this subject, authorizes the belief, that it is owing to the exertions made by Davies, and the public discussions on this subject, in which a man of his powers engaged, that sentiments, so just and liberal respecting religious liberty, have pervaded the population of Virginia. It was his intelligence, his vigour, his courage, that gave the impulse, and directed the public sentiment into the channel in which it now flows. The work begun by him, indeed, was pursued by others; and at length brought to a happy consummation." John H. Rice, The Virginia Literary and Evangelical Magazine, II, 363.

"His residence in the State is an era in its history. . . . .The Virginia Synod claims him as her spiritual father; and the Virginia creed in politics acknowledges his principles of religious freedom and civil liberty. His influence on politics was indirect, but not the less sure. The sole supremacy of Christ in the Church,--the authority of the Word of God,--the equality of the ministers of religion,--and individual rights of conscience, --the principles for which he plead before the General Court, and in defence of which he encountered such men as Pendleton, Wythe, Randolph, and the whole host of the aristocracy, are now a part and parcel of the religious and political creed of an overwhelming majority of the citizens of the 'Ancient Dominion'. He demonstrated the capability of the Church of Christ to sustain itself, not only without the fostering aid of the State, but under its oppressive laws. He showed the patriotism of true religion;--and in defending the principles of Presbytery, he maintained what Virginia now believes to be the inalienable rights of man." Foote, op. cit., pp. 304-05.